(d) Loss making banks have been advised by the Reserve Bank to reduce non-performing assets, increase average yield on advances and investments, reduce high cost funds and also contain credit expansion, reduce capital expenditure and not to undertake recruitment of fresh staff.

(e) and (f) The operational profit for public sector banks during 1995-96 was Rs. 7568.87 crores as compared to Rs. 5628.33 crores during 1994-95. The reasons for public sector banks incurring net losses during 1995-96 inspite of operating profit have been given above in reply to part (b) of the question.

[Translation]

Ban on Litigation of Public Interest.

*393. PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to impose a ban on public interest litigation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received a number of representations against the said move; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) No; Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Anti-dumping mechanism

*394. SHRI RAM NAIK :
SHRI SURESH KALMADI :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Board of Trade held a meeting at New Delhi on February 18, 1997 with the representative of the Confederation of Indian Industry for a strong anti-dumping mechanism;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government have identified or proposed to identify the foreign industires which are following dumping policy;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The meeting broadly discussed adequacy of the mechanism in India and the need to expedite investigations in a time bound manner. The Government is continuously monitoring the progress of filling of anti-dumping petitions by the industry before the Designated Authority prescribed under the Customs Tariff Act, 1975, and will strengthen the set up as and when necessary. As for expediting investigations, the various time limits have been laid down in the statutory rules (which conform to Article VI of the WTO Agreement.) These time limits are adhered to be the Designated Authority.

(c) Complaints and investigations regarding anti-dumping are specific to exporters overseas. There is no survey or identification of exporters or overseas industry for this purpose.

(d) & (e) Do not arise.

Low Ash Coal

*395. SHRI GOPAL KRISHNA T. : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the total demand of low ash coke from various Industries in the country as on December 31, 1996;

(b) the main industries that require low ash coke;

(c) whether the production of low ash coke is sufficient to meet the requirement; and

(d) if not, the steps the Government propose to take to boost the production of low ash coke ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) Planning Commission assess demand of raw coal sector-wise. Demand of hard coke is not assessed separately. According to the information received from Coal India neither there is any demand registered with them for low ash coke nor do they give any linkage for low ash coke.

However, private cokeries unit manufacture some quantity of low ash coke with ash content of 10% which coke is being supplied to some manufacturers of Electrodes and Carbide.

(c) and (d) Low ash coke is not manufactured in any subsidiaries of Coal India Ltd. Coal Companies under CIL produce hard coke. The pricing and distribution of hard coke has since been dereguilated. Production and Marketing of the same would be decided by coal companies based on the market trend and on commercial considerations.

[Translation]

Premium on new notes

*396. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of substantial premium on new one, two, five, ten and fifty rupee notes and one, two and five rupee coins, as reported in "Dainik Jagaran" dated the February 21, 1997.

(b) if so, the reasons for the non-availability of new currency notes and coins in the banks; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to make the currency notes and coins available in the market ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Due to capacity constraints, the note printing presses and the mints in the country are not able to fully meet the ever-increasing requirement of fresh notes and coins by the Reserve Bank of India. However, the Government have taken following steps for increasing availability of currency notes and coins :-

1. Modernisation of the existing two note printing presses at Nasik and Dewas.

2. Setting up of two more note printing presses, one at Salboni (West Bengal) and the other at Mysore (Karnataka) under the control of Reserve Bank of India.

3. Modernisation of Government of India mints at Mumbai, Calcutta and Hyderabad.

4. Coinisation of lower denomination notes of rupee 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 and diverting the capacity so released for printing notes of higher denominations.

5. Resorting to import of 3,600 million pieces of printed notes as well as 1000 million pieces of coins, as a one time measure.

[English]

Export of computer software

*397. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the percentage of growth registered in the export of electronics and computer software during each of the last three years, country-wise;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom during the above period;

(c) whether the exporters of software are facing a number of problems in exporting their items;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to boost the export of these items and redress the grievances of the exporters ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (e) The electronics and computer software sector is a sector which has registered consistent growth in the last few years. The percentage of growth registered in the export of electronics and computer software and foreign exchange earned during each of the last three years, regionwise, is explained in Statement attached.

Government have set up the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council for the promotion of electronics and computer software and for advising Government about the difficulties faced by this sector. As and when a problem is brought to the notice of the Government, the same is taken up on priority basis for resolution. The Government have also set up a Standing Committee on Electronics and Software under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministy of Commerce to deal with the issues which require a coordinated response by the Government. Other steps that are taken for promotion of exports include participation in exclusive Indian Trade Shows/International Exhibitions, visits of business delegations, etc. General measures include the operationalization of the Electronic Hardware Technology Park Scheme (EHTP), Software Technology Park Scheme (STP), which are export oriented schemes designed to boost exports.